

**Testimony of Michael Williams
President of Play Ball, DC
Before
Committee on Economic Development**

December 13, 2005

Good afternoon Madame Chairperson and Councilmembers. My name is Michael Williams and I am President of Play Ball, DC and Senior Athletic Director for the Boys and Girls Clubs, Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs. I would like to speak to you today regarding our position on the lease agreement that is the subject of this roundtable.

Introduction: Who are we

- ☐ Public Benefit is an issue that is not measurable or even debatable-cite personal example in Midwest (Frank Robinson as hero; Big Red Machine was cause for civic pride and identification)
- ☐ State of baseball in DC prior to team-volunteer based; not much public or private support; parents, coaches on their own-youth without local professional role models
- ☐ Growth in one season-**excitement** of team has increased numbers of youth; provided more private and public support
- ☐ Youth who attended games-impact on their lives
- ☐ Support from Nationals and DCSEC
- ☐ **Need for an owner is critical-focus should be on who and what they intend to provide to this community- what resources are they bringing? Please end the debate about parking spaces. Please see the big picture**
- ☐ **4th African American in 4 years has signed with a Division 1 college baseball program- this is without significant public or private support.**
- ☐ **The excitement generated this summer at RFK was a movement**
- ☐ **It is time for the city and the private sector to invest**
- ☐ **Approve the Lease and lets play ball**